

THE
CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

VOL. III.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1818.

[NO. 7

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY JOSHUA T. RUSSELL.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

DOMESTICK.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Second Annual Report.

ENCOURAGED by the increasing testimonies of publick favour to THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, and especially by indications of the divine blessing upon its efforts, the managers entered with alacrity upon the labours of their second year, which they have been enabled to complete with unimpaired harmony.

In the infancy of an institution so great in its object, so comprehensive in its plan, and so varied in its relations, difficulties are to be encountered and experiments made, which require much counsel, caution, and zeal, while yet they occupy but a comparatively small space in its visible operations. Many of those which are most essential are least observed, because they are only preparatory, and therefore do not furnish, except to the skilful examiner, a satisfactory test of its real progress.

Such has been the experience of the managers hitherto. They have been employed in laying foundations on which a fabrick, not unworthy, they trust, of its noble inscription, may rely for its future eminence and stability; and they have had no time to spare.

One of the first measures which engaged their deliberations after the anniversary meeting of the society, was the proper distribution of their stereotype plates. On this subject there existed an anxiety which demanded prompt attention, accompanied by circumstances involving questions of some delicacy. The managers were fully convinced of the importance of affording every possible aid to the circulation of the scriptures in distant parts of the country; of guarding against whatever might excite local embarrassments; and of preserving unimpaired the unity of the National Society, and the freedom of its agency through all its ramifications.

They, therefore, adopted as the basis of their proceedings with regard to the location of their stereotype plates, the principles contained in the following report of a Committee appointed to digest a plan for that purpose, which they feel it to be their duty to give at full length for the satisfaction of the members of the Society.

"The committee appointed to report a plan for the location and management of the stereotype plates belonging to the Society,

respectfully report, That they have bestowed upon the subject referred to them that deliberation to which its great importance entitled it. In the opinion of the Committee, the stereotype plates, if judiciously located and placed under proper regulations, cannot fail of being powerful instruments in spreading the knowledge of the scriptures. But on the other hand, should local jealousies be excited by the distribution of these plates, or should they, by an inconsiderate location, interfere with the issue of Bibles from the Depository at New-York, they would counteract that great principle of unity of efforts on which the American Bible Society is founded, and from which its fairest hopes of success are derived. Hence it becomes important to ascertain the general principle which ought to influence the location of these plates; and this principle the committee think they find recognised and explained in the address of the convention to the people of the United States. On consulting this address, we find that it was the intention of the convention that the society should "furnish great districts of the American continent with well executed stereotype plates, for the cheap and extensive diffusion of the scriptures throughout regions which are now scantily supplied at a discouraging expense." If, then, the principles thus recognised by the convention be adopted by the board, we are next to inquire how many sets of plates are to be disposed of. It is presumed that the board will choose to retain for the use of their own printing establishment, the plates presented by the New York societies, and at least one set of the octavo and duodecimo plates executed for the society. One duodecimo set has already been promised to the Kentucky Bible Society. Thus the board have now one duodecimo and two octavo sets to dispose of. An important question here presents itself, which is 'ought the octavo and duodecimo sets to be separated.' The committee believe that the board acted wisely in procuring the large plates. The smallness of the bibles hitherto distributed by our bible societies has been a subject of constant complaint; and it appears from reports of bible associations in England, the poor, when they subscribe for bibles, generally prefer those of a large type, although the price is proportionably high. Many of the poor read imperfectly, and find a large type far easier to read than a small one; while to many of the aged, the small type is entirely illegible. At the same time the small type is the cheapest, and answers for a large majority of readers. If we separate the sets, one district will be supplied with the small type only, and many of its inhabitants will feel the want of the important advantages enjoyed by the more fortunate district which possesses the scriptures in a more legible form: at the same time another district will have an edition large and handsome indeed, but too expensive for gratuitous distribution. If, to remedy this inconvenience, it be proposed to place the two sets at such a distance from each other, as that an exchange of bibles may constantly take place, the question immediately presents itself, why incur the expense of two printing establishments, and the risk and trouble of a constant interchange of bibles, when one establishment could supply each district with

bibles of the size desired? If it be admitted that the plates ought to be sent only to such districts, as in the language of the convention, 'are now scantily supplied at a discouraging expense,' and that the large and small plates ought not to be separated, then it only remains to fix on the places in which the plates ought to be located and the conditions on which the society ought to part with them. The board have already promised the Kentucky Bible Society the use of a set of the duodecimo plates: and, for the reasons already mentioned, the committee recommend to the board to offer to the same society the use of an octavo set also. Whether Lexington, which is the seat of the Kentucky Bible Society, is the best place which could have been selected for a printing establishment in that part of the state, is a question which the committee are not called on to decide; but they believe that, with the exception of Pittsburg, it possesses superior advantages to any town west of the mountains: and it may reasonably be doubted whether the Pittsburg Bible Society possesses equal resources for printing bibles, either on their own account, or on account of the board, with the Kentucky Bible Society; which from present appearances, promises to become a great and useful institution. There are other places besides Lexington, at which plates might be conveniently located; but the value of the plates is so great, and the reputation and future success of the society will so materially depend on the prudence with which these plates are distributed, and the wisdom with which the use of them may be regulated, that the committee hesitate in recommending at present any new location. The society is yet without experience, and possesses little local information or acquaintance with the character and resources of its auxiliaries. But little inconvenience can result from postponing the location of all the plates, except the two sets sent to Lexington, until the board shall be put in possession of such information as may be necessary to make a judicious location. At present we are ignorant of the terms on which paper can be procured and bibles printed in different parts of the United States; and it is possible that we might send the plates to a society which could procure bibles from another state cheaper than it could print them."

"With regard to the conditions on which the board ought to dispose of these plates, it would probably be most expedient that they should be of *general* application. The committee, therefore, recommend to the board the adoption of the following resolution: viz.

"Resolved, that, whenever the board of Managers shall grant to any Auxiliary Society the use of any of their stereotype plates, the grant shall be made on the following conditions:

"1st. The plates shall remain the property of the American Bible Society, and subject to be removed at the pleasure of the board, whenever, in their opinion, they can be more advantageously placed elsewhere. The plates shall be transported from New York at the expense of the board.

"2d. The Auxiliary Society to which the plates are sent may print from them, at their own expense, as many bibles as they may think proper for gratuitous distribution or sale within their own dis

trict; but they shall not send out of their district any bibles thus printed. The Auxiliary Society shall render to the board, as often as may be required, a particular account of the number and cost of the bibles printed and distributed by them.

"3d. In consideration of the gratuitous use of the stereotype plates, the Auxiliary Society shall cause to be printed, bound, and distributed, at the expense of the board, and agreeably to their orders, as many bibles as they may from time to time direct.

"The committee beg leave to offer the following remarks on the above conditions:

"By the *first condition* the board reserves the important privilege of changing the location of the plates, should expediency require it; and to this no real friend to the bible cause can consistently object. The board also assumes the expense of transporting the plates, and will thus render the offer of them more acceptable than it would otherwise be.

"On the *second and third conditions*, the committee would remark that in the disposition of the plates the board of course will be anxious not to violate any of the fundamental principles of the constitution. One of these principles is, that no auxiliary shall, at its own expense, distribute bibles beyond the limits of its own district, the general society being entitled to all the funds of its auxiliaries which may not be appropriated to the distribution of bibles within their respective districts. The board cannot, therefore, either give or loan to any auxiliary a set of plates for the purpose of supplying any but its own district; otherwise the society would lose its character of an auxiliary, would never have any surplus funds to transmit to the general society, and would, in fact, become a branch of the American Bible Society; at the same time, it would be of comparatively little use to send plates to an auxiliary, if the bibles to be printed from them were never to pass the confines of the district in which the society is established. In order, therefore, to preserve inviolate the principles of the constitution, and the prerogatives of the society, and at the same time to render our plates instrumental in giving to the bible as wide a circulation as possible, the auxiliary is restricted by these conditions from distributing bibles out of its own district on its own account; and it is at the same time obligated to act as the agent of the board when required. Every society imposed this restriction on itself when it became an auxiliary; and the condition leaves to the auxiliary all the rights to which it is entitled. It may expend all its funds in supplying the wants of its own district. The auxiliary to which the plates are sent will probably begin immediately to print bibles; and then, the board will have all the advantages of an experiment, without participating in its risk. We shall soon ascertain on what terms bibles can be printed at Lexington, for instance; and should we deem it advisable to establish there a great depot of bibles for the supply of the Western States and Territories, the Kentucky Bible Society will, under the *third condition*, afford great facilities for the accomplishment of this important object. The board may direct any number of bibles to

be printed for them, and may distribute them with no other trouble than giving an order on the Depository in Lexington.

"On the whole the committee believe, that the plan they now recommend is at least free from danger; that no injurious consequence will result from its adoption; and that until the board shall possess more information it would be imprudent to locate the remaining plates, with the exception already mentioned; since in concerns of so much magnitude and importance it is easier to avoid mistakes than to correct them when made."

Conformably to the principles contained in the above report, an offer was made by the board to the Kentucky Bible Society of a set of the *octavo*, in connexion with one of the *duodecimo* stereotype plates of the bible. The managers of that institution have expressed their entire approbation and acquiescence in the conditions stipulated, and their grateful acceptance of the grant.

(*To be continued.*)

ADDRESS

Of the Hon. Elias Boudinot, L. L. D. President of the society.

BRETHREN AND FELLOW-CHRISTIANS,—With grateful hearts let us hail this auspicious day! A day wholly unexpected by me; and which a kind providence has been pleased to add to a long life, to cheer and brighten its setting sun.

When I look about me, and realize that I am surrounded, *in this place*, by you, beloved brethren and fellow-workers in the Lord's vineyard, whose faces I had long despaired of ever seeing in the flesh, though I ardently desired it, I am filled with unbounded gratitude to our divine Master. It was to be feared, that my shattered and feeble frame would not have been able to support the keen and lively sensations which this affecting spectacle affords; and it is through the unspeakable mercy of the God of my life, that I have been brought from the confines of the dead to preside, even once, in this august society, to congratulate you, beloved friends,—and in a special manner, the *excellent and worthy officer* who has presided in all your councils with such indefatigable attention, from the commencement of the institution to the present day—with such unassuming dignity—with so much patience and well-tempered zeal—and in a manner altogether so credible to himself and useful to the common cause—I say, to congratulate you all on the peculiar honour done you, in your being made instruments to open the eyes of the blind—to cheer the melancholy abodes of ignorance and sin—to enlighten the darkened understanding—and to irradiate with the beams of the sun of righteousness the regions of superstition, the recesses of Mahometan delusion and heathen idolatry. What christian can contemplate, without the most delightful emotions, this union of professors of the religion of Jesus of every denomination, co-operating in sending the glorious gospel of the Son of God to every part of the habitable globe! Is it not a surprising providence, that on this blessed principle, (till lately untried by the children

men,) the rich and the poor, the male and the female, the child and the grey-headed, the master and the servant, and indeed every one who is deeply affected with the fallen state of mankind, and can command a cent a week, are made preachers of the gospel of salvation and eternal life to a guilty and sinful world. This is an exact compliance with what our Saviour foretold, "and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv. 14. John, the beloved disciple, seems to have had a beautiful figure of it in view when he represents "the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel in his hands to preach unto them who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." This indeed, added to the translating of the Scriptures into all the languages of the civilized earth, is emphatically preaching to all the world. This is one of those remarkable signs of the times, which unerring authority has assured us should usher in the second advent of the Son of Man, when "He shall come in his glory and in the glory of the Father."

The blessed Saviour preached the glad tidings of salvation wherever he went. Night and day was he engaged in this all-important work. He delayed not a moment. He made use of those means appointed by God. He preached the salvation to a dying world. His language was short and pithy. He saw a world perishing in sin. He cried aloud: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved. He who believeth on him is not condemned; but he who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The apostles followed their Master's great example, and confined themselves to the gospel he had communicated to them. Souls were incalculably precious—no time was to be lost. The Old Testament, though equally of divine authority, was not so essentially necessary under the pressure of that occasion, till the clearer light of the gospel had laid the solemn foundation of knowledge and of hope. It was a considerable time before the gospels were written. The instructions of the Saviour, with the personal knowledge and miraculous works of the apostles, were the principal means of salvation to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The assurance to them, "that God had made that same Jesus (who had then lately been crucified) both Lord and Christ," was the substance of their preaching on the day of Pentecost. The gospel of Matthew was not written till about the year 62; and the other gospels and epistles were afterwards written at different periods and sent to the churches, with orders to have them read in public; but it was some years before they were collected into one volume; I believe, not before the council of Laodicea; and even then, a copy was so difficult to be obtained, that few, very few people could purchase one. So late as the year 1272, a copy of the Bible

cost in London 30 pound sterling, at the very time that two of the arches of London bridge were built for 25 pounds.

But the New Testament, in its present state, is a book without a parallel: and to use the words of an intimate friend, "There is not a book in the world which contains such strong internal evidence, or so many characteristic traits of an ingenious undesigning honesty, as are to be found in evangelical memoirs. They are their own unanswerable proof: and though, blessed be God! christianity is supported by a great mass of external testimony, yet if every particle of that testimony had perished; if not a single page of the ancient fathers had reached us; if all the christian and heathen authors, whose writings confirm in any manner the truth and genuineness of the gospel history, had been utterly lost in the wreck of time, yet the memoirs of the life and doctrines of Christ, as written by the Evangelists, would have, of themselves, (under the influence of the Spirit of God given according to his promise,) afforded a satisfactory proof of the truth of revelation. If, then, the internal evidence be so convincing, and if, moreover, that evidence be (as it providentially is) illustrated and strengthened by a copious variety of external argument and testimony, how shall we escape if we wilfully neglect so great salvation? Or when we behold so many of our fellow men, not only speculative unbelievers in christianity, but scoffers at its usefulness, active and strenuous opposers to its propagation, how can we think of their perverseness without dismay, or their blindness without a sigh.

The Old Testament is of equal authenticity and importance; and united they form one perfect and divine system of revealed truth, for promoting the circulation of which we are associated, and are desirous this day, under the divine superintendence, to send to every part of this our sinful world, by the united exertions of all the friends of the crucified Jesus. Our object is, the universal happiness of mankind—the salvation of the souls of men, and, of course, the glory of God.

Thus, the American Bible Society, animated with the most catholic principles of christian charity, offers these records of eternal life to bond and free—to heathen and christian—in the earnest hope that they may become "a lamp to their feet and a light to their path." Psal. cxix. 105.

Take courage then, my brethren; be not weary in well-doing. You are serving a kind and gracious master who will finally reward you with a crown of glory which shall never fade away. Can you desire a greater honour? Can you ever repay such condescending love, as thus to be found worthy of entering the Gospel vineyard, and, though at the eleventh hour, showing forth the glory of our Immanuel in his expected approach to this our world? In this world on his first advent, he was treated with contempt, scourging, derision, condemnation, and death: in this world he must yet see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. In Heaven he was *always* honoured and glorified by the whole angelick host. John says, (Rev. v. 11.) "And I heard the voice of many angels round about the

throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb; for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said Amen: and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who liveth for ever and ever."

In this world, therefore, and from those very creatures who crucified him and despised him, must he yet receive honour and glory and power. But this same Jesus, now exalted to his throne of glory calls this day upon us to engage with him in this contest, and to come out against the mighty.

Are not your hearts on fire at this blessed summons? Again, then, I say, take courage. Rejoice in your exalted undertaking. Let no sectarian jealousies enter or prevail among you. This is Satan's last and great dependance—his strong hold—the most dangerous arrow in his quiver—his only hope. But do you, my brethren, never forget that he who is for us, whose cause we espouse and promote, is stronger than he who is against us, and came with the express design of destroying his kingdom and his power.

May the best of Heaven's blessings be ever upon you, rousing you to the ardent desire of the Apostles. When sent on the like errand, they thus encouraged each other, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith." What is it, my brethren, that you have in view in all these mighty exertions? Is it not the glory of God? Is it not to pour the oil of joy and consolation into the wounded spirit of the repentant sinner, bowed down with affliction and distress—to lead him, weary and heavy laden, to the compassionate Physician who alone can give him rest? Is it not to send the bread and water of life to the wandering prodigal, who has been taking up with the husks and the swine in a dry and parched land where no water is? Remember we are united in one body—we have but one cause—one object in view—one master to serve—one end to accomplish—the salvation of our brethren of the human race, since we are assured *that Christ tasted death for every man.* Heb. ii. 9.

Again I repeat it, with inexpressible pleasure, rejoice in your present glorious privilege. The numbers of those who shall, in the great day of account, attribute their first knowledge of redeeming love to your perseverance and zeal in sending the gospel, against all opposition and rebuke, through good report and evil report, throughout the world, will be an unspeakable recompense to you in the presence of an assembled universe; and even at the present moment, the contemplation of so ineffable and heart-consoling a prospect of reward, for all that you can now do or suffer, by yielding to each other and bearing each others' burthens, and at all events, sweetly agreeing to differ, must make you joyful even in tribulation.

May the love of Christ constrain you to continue in an indissoluble bond of friendship and peace. Let all discordant principles be banished far from your councils and deliberations, that you may accomplish the one end and hope of your calling, even a speedy preparation for the second coming of our divine redeemer. Persevere unto the end, and you shall most assuredly receive the blessed plaudit of "well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord".

My brethren, however little I have said to any valuable purpose on this occasion, I hope you will not forget my great age, my long confinement, and extreme weakness both of mind and body. My earnest desire has been, in the discharge of this labour of love, to manifest my respectful attention to, and sincere regard for you all. In doing this, I have risked much. But should it be my last effort, I will rejoice to conclude a long life with the words and in the spirit of good old Simeon, on the Saviour's first coming in the flesh, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

Finally, brethren, farewell. May you continue united as one man, by the spirit of our God. May the broad hand of the Almighty continue to cover you, and direct you in all your councils, and make you be gloriously triumphant in destroying all the wiles and schemes of the wicked one for deluding the souls of men; and may you be most successful in the re-establishment of the kingdom of righteousness and peace through the world.—Amen.

A NARRATIVE

Of the state of religion; within the bounds of the general assembly of the Presbyterian church; and of the general associations of Connecticut, New-Hampshire, Massachusetts Proper, and of the general convention of Vermont, during the last year.

(Concluded from page 89. vol. 3.)

The assembly having unfolded the causes for sorrow, which the past year has produced, proceed to state those which call for thankfulness and rejoicing. These are,

1. THE REGULAR AND FAITHFUL PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCES THROUGHOUT OUR BOUNDS.—We have heard of no instances of negligence on the part of the ministers and officers of the church. They appear to have discharged their duty, both in the work of teaching and of exercising discipline, in an enlightened conscientious and diligent manner. The youth receive stated catechetical instruction, and in some of our presbyteries, particular attention is paid to baptized children.

In addition to this we mention with particular pleasure the various religious institutions which have been established during the year, or having been established before, are progressing with suc-

cess in their operations. These are Bible, missionary, tract, Sunday school, moral and praying societies; Bible classes and the theological seminary in Princeton, together with the monthly concert of prayer for the spread of the gospel. Originating in the spirit of true religion, they are sedulously used for its advancement far and wide. Between them there exists no collision of interests, for they have but one object in view, the promotion of human happiness by the power of the truth of God. Bible societies in our day are related to missionary societies, as the gift of tongues was related to the commission of the apostles in the primitive church. We therefore rejoice at the increase of the former, because they furnish to the preachers of the cross sent forth by the latter to every nation, the word of life in their own language. The circulation of religious tracts is calculated to awaken attention to, and produce inquiry after the way to salvation. In the silence of the closet—in the assemblage of the family—nay in the social circle, they present to the thoughtless and disobedient subjects deserving their examination and arresting them for a season in their downward way to ruin. Throughout our bounds religious tract societies as well as Bible and missionary societies have increased. In a large majority of our churches Bible classes have been formed and instruction is dispensed to pupils from the Bible. Praying societies have become more numerous—few, if any formerly existing being abandoned, and new ones in different places being formed. The monthly concert for prayer is generally observed and promises a blessing. Sunday schools have been established in most of our presbyteries and are affording to multitudes the means of instruction for their present and eternal welfare. In these schools, as well as in Bible and missionary societies we have heard with no ordinary satisfaction, that the female sex have taken an active part in promoting their success. They thus manifest their gratitude to that religion which in christian lands has elevated them to their proper station and qualified them for discharging its duties with honour and usefulness. Last but not least we state the flourishing condition of our Theological Seminary at Princeton, which promises to send forth streams continually to make glad the city of our God. More than fifty preachers of the gospel have already gone forth from it, to labour in the master's vineyard; many of whom are engaged on most important missionary ground.

2. THE BENEFICIAL RESULTS OF THE EFFORTS OF THESE INSTITUTIONS. They appear in the success of missionary exertions—the increase of our churches—a growing disposition to give liberally of this world's goods for the cause of Christ—a melioration of publick morals—and revivals of religion.

1. The missionary field which we occupy is almost as extensive as the boundaries of our country.

For many years past the reports of the missionaries who have laboured under the direction of the General Assembly have been highly gratifying and encouraging. But in no year hitherto have these reports been so animating to the friends of the Redeemer, as the pre-

sent. Not only have many new congregations and churches been formed by the labours of our missionaries; not only have those who on the frontier and in the destitute parts of our country mourned their silent sabbaths and their dearth of spiritual refreshment, been cheered by the evangelical messages they have heard; but in several instances revivals of religion of the most important kind and interesting character, have followed the faithful preaching, and been fostered by the pious zeal of our missionaries. The demand for their labours is most urgent and importunate, particularly in the western and northern parts of the state of New-York and throughout the transatlantic states.

2. During the past year God has been pleased to add largely, not only to the number of our churches, but also to that of our members. In many of the presbyteries new congregations have been formed. And in those churches who have not been blessed with special revivals, the accessions to the communion in most have been numerous, and in many, more than usual. God has not forgotten to be gracious to them, but has accompanied his word and ordinances with power to the salvation of sinners.

Throughout our churches also a spirit of harmony and brotherly love prevails, which we trust will be cherished in all time to come. The existence of such a spirit, where it is not connected with the dereliction of principle, is a decisive evidence of increase in the divine life. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Christ, "if ye have love one to another." We are constrained to add, that a very large proportion of Sunday school teachers in different places, especially in Philadelphia and New-York, have had their work blessed to their conversion.

3. We rejoice as one of the fruits of religious institutions amongst us, in the growing disposition on the part of professors to give liberally of their worldly substance for the promotion of the Redeemer's cause. We are persuaded that where religion is experienced in its power, there wealth will always be considered as granted with the express provision that a portion must be devoted to the Lord. They who do not act according to this provision, clearly prove that they love their money more than their God and Saviour.

4. Publick morals are decidedly better than they were sometime back throughout the church—but particularly in the presbyteries of Niagara, Onondago, Bath, Albany, Long Island, Lexington, Transylvania, and the cities of Philadelphia and New-York. In these the improvement has been specially observed—though in other presbyteries and places it is progressing. We feel constrained here to mention, and we do it with pleasure, that in those states where slavery unhappily prevails the negroes are treated with more attention than heretofore, and increasing exertions are made to promote their comfort and correct their vices which are the natural result of their state of bondage.

5. God has been pleased to grant unto several of our congregations a time of refreshing from his presence. The assembly feel considerable difficulty in selecting from the number of revivals which

have occurred, those especially deserving notice; for they are not furnished with statistical information as it respects the population of the different places. Whilst, they desire to mark with peculiar attention all the gracious dealings of God towards our fallen race, they feel it to be their duty to discriminate between those which partake of an ordinary character and those which are more than ordinary. Inattention to this rule they are persuaded, is calculated to reduce all God's gracious dealings to a level which must have a corresponding effect upon the thanks and praises of his people. The presbyteries which have been blessed with revivals are, Cayuga, Champlain, Columbia, Jersey, West Lexington, and Concord. Of these the most extensive have occurred in the first, where, out of twenty-six congregations, seventeen have been visited with the outpouring of the spirit, and nearly six hundred added to the church on confession. Of these seventeen the trophies of divine grace have been most numerous in the congregations of Ithaca, Lansing, Aurelius, but chiefly Auburn.

In the presbytery of Jersey, the congregations of Bloomfield, Connecticut Farms, Newark, Elizabethtown, Orange and Patterson are gathering in the fruits of the revival of last year. The congregation of Rockaway and the second church in Woodbridge, of this presbytery; the congregations of De Kalb, Malone and Russal, in the presbytery of Champlain; Mount Pleasant, Stoner-Mouth, Paris, Concord, Hemingsburg and Smyrna, in the presbytery of West Lexington; Bullock's Creek, Salem, Beersheba, Bethesda, Bethel-Olney in the presbytery of Concord; Pittstown and Bolton in the presbytery of Columbia, have been favoured with special revivals. The character of these revivals has been such as to prove them divine. The subjects have conducted themselves with that propriety and decorum which always characterize the work of God: and after obtaining a good hope of acceptance have walked in the ways of the Lord blameless.

The General Assembly feel thankful that they can, without being charged with enthusiasm say, the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom have advanced throughout their bounds. It is true the number of revivals is not so great as in some former years—but the fruits of these revivals remain in their beauty and usefulness to gladden our hearts. They who have been called into the church from the world, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. This we consider as a subject of congratulation and praise; for it is an indubitable truth that on the consistent deportment of professors of religion under the divine blessing depends the successful recommendation of its claims to the world. "Let your light," such is Christ's command, "so shine before men, that they seeing your *good works* may glorify your Father who is in heaven." We therefore exhort you brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, that you walk worthy of your high vocation. Whilst you earnestly and perseveringly seek for the salvation of sinners, do not neglect your own growth in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The age in which we live is correctly denominated *the age of action*. So numerous are the associations

for promoting the cause of truth and so assiduous are the exertions of its friends to ensure success, that more than ordinary diligence is necessary to take heed to ourselves. There is a splendour which this universal and increasing action in the church, reflects upon individual character, that may so far dazzle the spiritual perception, and taint the spiritual taste, as to give the adversary, a real advantage over those very persons who are attacking his kingdom, and circumscribing his power. Be much engaged in your closets, examining the state of your own hearts, and the nature of your motives. Do still more for God in the world than you ever have done; but connect with this, an increasing attention to your personal sanctification. Forget not that it is indispensably requisite for you to cultivate purity of intellect, as well as purity of affection. No attention to the latter will, or can compensate for neglect of the former. Such neglect, has in too many instances already in different parts caused a conformity of conduct to the maxims of the world. It is not sufficient for the professed believer to keep within the established rules of conducting social business, or the statute laws of the land; he must in spirit and in deportment, "do unto others as he would wish to be done by himself," under similar circumstances. His morality must be christian morality, the legitimate fruit of his actual union with him who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Remember that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: for he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

In the bounds of the General Associations of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, and the general convention of Vermont, nothing has occurred of special importance since the last report. The churches are reaping the fruits of past revivals; the cause of religion is advancing; error and vices are losing ground. The Theological Seminary in Andover, has eighty students, preparing for the work of the ministry. The various institutions which have been established in past years for the promotion of religion are prospering. We rejoice in the progress of truth among our congregational brethren, and pray that God may continue to bless them.

In the conclusion the assembly adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Amen, and Amen.

Published by order of the General Assembly,

Attest, WILLIAM NEIL, *Stated Clerk.*

Philadelphia, May, 1818.

Sentiments of the Presbyterian church on the subject of slavery.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church having taken into consideration the subject of SLAVERY, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it to the churches and people under their care.

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins that, "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them." Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system—it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings, in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery; consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is always exposed often take place in fact, and in their very worst degree and form: and where all of them do not take place, as we rejoice to say that in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the minds of masters, they do not—still the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master, who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.

From this view of the consequences resulting from the practice into which christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their brethren of mankind—for "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth"—it is manifestly the duty of all christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest and unwearied endeavours, to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout christendom, and if possible throughout the world.

We rejoice that the church to which we belong commenced, as early as any other in this country, the good work of endeavouring to put an end to slavery and that in the same work, many of its members have ever since been, and now are among the most active, vigorous and efficient labourers. We do, indeed, tenderly sympathize with those portions of our church and our country, where the evil of slavery has been entailed upon them; where a *great*, and the *most virtuous part* of the *community* abhor slavery, and wish its extermination, as sincerely as any others—but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally, render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent, alike, with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave. With those who

are thus circumstanced, we repeat that we tenderly sympathize. At the same time, we earnestly exhort them to continue, and, if possible, to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern than a regard to the publick welfare *truly* and *indispensably* demands.

As our country has inflicted a most grievous injury on the unhappy Africans, by bringing them into slavery, we cannot, indeed, urge that we should add a second injury to the first, by emancipating them in such a manner as that they would be likely to destroy themselves or others. But we do think that our country ought to be governed in this matter, by no other consideration than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party; uninfluenced by the expense or inconvenience which such a regard may involve. We therefore warn all who belong to our denomination of christians against unduly extending this plea of necessity; against making it a cover for the love and practice of slavery, or a pretence for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable, to extinguish the evil.

And we, at the same time, exhort others to forbear harsh censures, and uncharitable reflections on their brethren, who unhappily live among slaves, whom they cannot immediately set free; but who, at the same time, are really using all their influence, and all their endeavours, to bring them into a state of freedom, as soon as a door for it can be safely opened.

Having thus expressed our views of slavery, and of the duty indispensably incumbent on all christians to labour for its complete extinction, we proceed to recommend—(and we do it with all the earnestness and solemnity which this momentous subject demands)—a particular attention to the following points.

1. We recommend to all our people to patronize and encourage the society, lately formed, for colonizing in Africa, the land of their ancestors, the people of colour in our country. We hope that much good may result from the plans and efforts of this society. And while we exceedingly rejoice to have witnessed its origin and organization among the *holders of slaves*, as giving an unequivocal pledge of their desire to deliver themselves and their country from the calamity of slavery, we hope that those portions of the American union, whose inhabitants are by a gracious providence more favourably circumstanced, will cordially and liberally, and earnestly co-operate with their brethren, in bringing about the great end contemplated.

2. We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination, not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves, in the principles and duties of the christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the gospel, when they have the opportunity; by favouring the instruction of them in Sabbath schools, wherever those schools can be formed; and by giving them all other proper advantages for acquiring the knowledge of their duty both to God and man. We are perfect-

ly satisfied, that as it is incumbent on all christians to communicate religious instruction to those who are under their authority, so that the doing of this in the case before us, so far from operating, as some have apprehended that it might, as an excitement to insubordination and insurrection, would, on the contrary, operate as the most powerful means for the prevention of those evils.*

3. We enjoin it on all church sessions and presbyteries, under the care of this assembly; to discountenance, and, as far as possible, to prevent, all cruelty of whatever kind in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and children, and that which consists in selling slaves to those who will either themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the gospel, or who will transport them to places where the gospel is not proclaimed, or where it is forbidden to slaves to attend upon its institutions—the manifest violation or disregard of the injunction here given, in its true spirit and intention, ought to be considered as just ground for the discipline and censures of the church. And if it shall ever happen that a christian professor, in our communion, shall sell a slave who is also in communion and good standing with our church, contrary to his or her will, and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the particular attention of the proper church judicature; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen, it ought to be followed, without delay, by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the church, till he repent, and make all the reparation in his power to the injured party.

Passed by the *unanimous* vote of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States, and signed by their order, by

J. J. JANEWAY, *Moderator.*

Philadelphia, June, 2, 1818.

* The following intelligence has been recently received, and may be relied on as authentick—"The legislature of Antigua, having held a conference with the missionaries (of the United Brethren, commonly called Moravians) to induce them to extend their missions there, and finding it out of their power, voted them one thousand pounds to build a church and house, and three hundred pounds per annum, for the support of missionaries at one station; granting and offering, as much crown land as should be wanted for that or other stations; and in the despatch to lord Bathurst from the government of Antigua; it is stated that the legislature lamented their limited finances prevented their doing more, as they were persuaded, that to the labours of those missionaries among the negroes, they were mainly indebted for a state of profound tranquillity, while other islands had been exposed to revolt and insurrection. The brethren have about twelve thousand negroes in their congregations on that island."

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED EVERY SATURDAY, BY JOHN D. TOY, CORNER OF MARKET AND
LIGHT STREETS, AT FOUR DOLLARS A YEAR, PAYABLE
HALF YEARLY IN ADVANCE.